

TENNESSEE CITIZENS FOR WILDERNESS PLANNING

Newsletter No. 122 (special), August 4, 1982*

CHEROKEE NATIONAL FOREST WILDERNESS ALERT

The U. S. Forest Service recently released Draft Environmental Impact Statements (DEIS'S) recommending non-wilderness for 90% of the Citico Creek and Big Frog Mountain Wilderness Study Areas (see NL 121, ¶2 for details.) If these recommendations are not changed in the final impact statements, both areas will be opened to development such as clear-cut logging and construction of a network of logging roads. The Forest Service has requested public comments on the DEIS's, which will be accepted until September 25, 1982.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT FOR TENNESSEE WILDERNESS. It is crucial that as many people as possible write letters to the Forest Service (address below) before September 25 in order to overcome the anti-wilderness bias of the DEIS's. Equally important is to send copies of your letters to Congressman John Duncan (whose District will include both areas after January 1, 1983). The ultimate decision on East Tennessee Wilderness will be made by the Congress, and Duncan's position will be decisive.

Background:

Both Big Frog and Citico were designated as Study Areas by Congress in the Eastern Wilderness Act of 1974. Big Frog is adjacent to Georgia's Cohutta Wilderness. In the language of the DEIS, Big Frog is "the most prominent landform in surrounding area, has the highest roadless area rating in Cherokee National Forest, most extensive trail system, rainbow trout streams, high water quality." Yet only 2373 acres out of over 5000 were recommended for Wilderness.

Citico Creek, in Monroe County, fared even worse. Although described as having "visual appeal, rugged terrain, seven threatened species, areas of virgin and old growth timber, interesting waterfalls with 75 and 80 foot drops, rainbow and brook trout streams, animal species of special concern (bear), extensive trail system and excellent water quality," not a single acre was recommended for wilderness.

The rationale given for these negative recommendations was that "need cannot be clearly established" for wilderness in Tennessee. However, figures given in the DEIS demonstrate that nearby Wilderness areas such as Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock and Shining Rocks already suffer from overuse. The issue of need is the key point to address in your letters. Copies of the DEIS are available from the Forest Service or from Will Skelton (addresses below).

What you can do:

1. If you can do nothing else to help ensure a Wilderness heritage for East Tennessee, mail the three enclosed preaddressed postcards today -- while you are thinking about it -- to the Forest Service, Cong. Duncan, and Senator Baker. Write your return address in the space provided, sign, add

* Editor: Liane B. Russell, 130 Tabor Road, Oak Ridge, TN 37830. Phone 615, 482-2153
Material for this NL by Andy Butler

What you can do (cont'd.):

a 13¢ stamp. Additional sets of cards* are available from TCWP (130 Tabor Road, Oak Ridge, TN 37830. Ph 615, 482-2153). *for friends and family

2. If possible, follow up with your own personal letter to the Forest Service, with copies to Cong. Duncan and to your own Congressman (if you live in another district). The deadline for comment to the Forest Service is Sept. 25. Addresses are:

Forest Supervisor
P. O. Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37311

and

The Honorable John Duncan
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

3. Collect as many signatures as possible on the enclosed petition and return it to Will Skelton (address below) by September 20. More copies of the petition are available from Will.
4. Attend the public hearing at the Courthouse in Athens, Tennessee, on Tuesday, August 24 at 7:30 p.m., and speak out on behalf of Wilderness for Citico and Big Frog. For information on car-pooling from the Knoxville - Oak Ridge area to Athens, contact Julie McDill (Knoxville, 693-8318) or Andy Butler (Oak Ridge, 482-5703). It is important to demonstrate strong public support for Wilderness.
5. If you would like to help with petitions, form letters, comments on the DEIS, work on a hiking guide to Citico Creek, or write letters to the editor, contact Andy Butler, Jenny Freeman, or Will Skelton (addresses below).

For more information, contact:

Jenny Freeman, Executive Director, TCWP, 3411 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, Tennessee 37919; 524-5673.

Andy Butler, TCWP Forestry Committee, 100 Trevecca Lane, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830; home, 482-5703; work 574-0838.

Will Skelton, Cherokee N. F. Wilderness Coalition, 4058 Kingston Park Drive, Knoxville, Tennessee; home 523-2272; work 546-2800.

REMEMBER: If we are ever to have any Wilderness in Tennessee, it will be because you and your friends -- thousands and thousands of citizens -- show that you want it. It's up to you!

*
* Stay at the scenic River-Bend Farm on the Obed -- and help TCWP *
* Do you know of anyone to visit Expo who wants a beautiful (and reasonable) place to *
* stay? Do you and your family want to get out into the country for a weekend, swim in *
* the Obed, hike? Jack and Mary Ann Gibbons are renting their farm this season to *
* members of conservation groups, and will turn over part of any profit as a contribu- *
* tion to TCWP. Accommodations include screened cabins with bunk beds (bring own bed- *
* ding), a bathhouse, outdoor firepits, and a central dining and social hall where *
* breakfast will be served. Mail inquiries to TCWP, 130 Tabor Road, Oak Ridge, TN *
* 37830. *

13¢
stamp

The Honorable John Duncan
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Honorable John Duncan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

return address: _____

Dear Congressman Duncan:

I strongly disagree with the conclusion of the Forest Service draft EIS that no more wilderness is needed in Tennessee. Less than 2% of Tennessee's National Forest is Wilderness. Our population is growing rapidly; the Forest Service admits that use of existing Wilderness areas in the region already exceeds carrying capacity. Under Wilderness designation, traditional non-motorized uses, including hunting, fishing, and hiking would continue. The Citico Creek and Big Frog Wilderness Study areas are beautiful, with many opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. I urge you to sponsor legislation to designate both of these areas as Wilderness.

Sincerely,

13¢
stamp

Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr.
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr.
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

return address: _____

Dear Senator Baker:

I strongly disagree with the conclusion of the Forest Service draft EIS that no more wilderness is needed in Tennessee. Less than 2% of Tennessee's National Forest is Wilderness. Our population is growing rapidly; the Forest Service admits that use of existing Wilderness areas in the region already exceeds carrying capacity. Under Wilderness designation, traditional non-motorized uses, including hunting, fishing, and hiking, would continue. The Citico Creek and Big Frog Wilderness Study areas are beautiful, with many opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. I urge you to sponsor legislation to designate both of these areas as Wilderness.

Sincerely,

13¢
stamp

Forest Supervisor
P. O. Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37311

Forest Supervisor
P. O. Box 2010
Cleveland, TN 37311

return address: _____

Dear Sir:

I urge you to recommend Wilderness designation for the entire Citico Creek and Big Frog Study Areas. Less than 2% of Tennessee's National Forest is Wilderness. The need for more, within reach of our State's fast growing population, is evident. Your own draft EIS admits that current use of existing Wilderness areas in the southern Appalachians exceeds their carrying capacity. These two areas have exceptional natural beauty and opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. Under Wilderness designation, all traditional non-motorized forms of use would continue. Please make my comments part of the public record for the final EIS.

Sincerely,
